



2011-2012

# FAMILY HANDBOOK



**NORTHSIDE CATHOLIC ACADEMY**

**President: Fr. Dominic Grassi**  
**Principal: Ms. Debbie Sullivan**

**Assistant Principal/Director of Curriculum & Instruction: Mary Stachura**  
**Executive Assistant: Leigh Holzman**  
**Business Manager: Walter Pophin**  
**Director of Institutional Advancement: Kristi Erickson**  
**Athletic Director: Kevin Howard**

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Secretary: Mrs. Suellen Cannon

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Secretary: Mrs. Krys Yates

**St. Gertrude Parish**

1420 W. Granville  
Chicago, Il. 60660  
773-764-3621

**Rev. Dominic Grassi**  
Pastor

**St. Gregory Parish**

5545 N. Paulina  
Chicago, Il. 60640  
773-561-3546

**Rev. Paul Wachdorf**  
Pastor

**St. Henry Parish**

6335 N. Hoyne  
Chicago, IL 60659  
773-764-7413

**Rev. Dominic Vinh Ha**  
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**St. Ita Parish**

1220 W. Catalpa  
Chicago, Il. 60640  
773-561-5343

**Rev. David Pavlik**  
Pastor

**St. Ignatius Parish**

6559 N. Glenwood  
Chicago, IL 60626  
773-764-5936

**Rev. Joe Jackson**  
Pastor

**St. Jerome Parish**

1709 W. Lunt  
Chicago, IL 60626  
773-262-3170

**Rev. Jeremy Thomas**  
Pastor

**School Board Officers**

**President: Annie O'Neil**  
**Vice President: Jennifer Reyes**  
**Secretary: Sara Ellis**

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### **NCA Mission Statement**

The mission of Northside Catholic School is to know, love, and serve God by providing a challenging academic education integrated with Catholic values and morals developing the whole person: spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. NCA faculty and staff work with the six NCA parishes, parents, and students to create an environment where people care for and respect each other. (revised Jan. 2008)

### **NCA Philosophy**

#### **About Students and Learning, We believe that...**

- Teaching our students to know, love, and serve God is the chief priority of our school.
- All students can learn
- Academic excellence is the focus of learning and supports the total development of the whole student
- All students are contributing members to our diverse community and six NCA parishes.
- Each student's learning styles are addressed by a myriad of teaching strategies and a variety of resources.
- Students should model Christian values and show respect for themselves and others.
- Students of Northside Catholic Academy are responsible for their learning and behavior.

#### **About Curriculum, We believe that...**

- Faith formation (teaching all children to know, love, and serve God) is at the core of the NCA curriculum and becomes a component of each student's daily life through prayer, worship and the study of social justice.
- The NCA curriculum provides a framework for developmental and integrated learning while recognizing progress and measuring achievement.
- The NCA curriculum offers a variety of learning opportunities related to life experiences.
- The NCA curriculum is in accordance and agreement with the curriculum of the Archdiocese of Chicago for Pre-Kindergarten to 8<sup>th</sup> grade levels.
- Fine arts and music extend beyond the classroom and annual concerts to our school masses and daily prayer.

#### **About Teachers and Teaching, We believe that...**

- Knowing, loving, and serving God is expressed through our "calling" or teaching vocation.
- The teacher is the facilitator and role model who fosters growth and self-esteem by acting as listener, motivator, encourager, and professional educator.
- Teachers are life-long learners
- Teachers must promote active learning
- Teachers are instructional leaders
- Teachers must be aware of different student learning styles and use a variety of methods to meet the various learning styles and student academic needs.

**About Administration (President and Principal) We believe that...**

- Knowing, loving, and serving God is our personal and professional priority.
- We are life-long learners.
- NCA curriculum and values are in direct concordance with the Roman Catholic Church.
- We provide a safe, nurturing, and compassionate environment which is conducive to learning.
- We work together to foster a harmonious relationship between ourselves in order to better serve the NCA community.

**About Parents, the 6 NCA Parishes, and Communities. We believe that...**

- If our students are to develop a real and devout faith in God, they need to see this modeled by parent, guardians and community members.
- Parents/guardians are the primary educators and role models for the child.
- Parents provide support and cooperation as an integral part of a team working to achieve the common goal of educating the whole child.
- Parents must be active partners with NCA concerning their student's education.
- Our 6 NCA parishes: St. Gregory the Great, St. Gertrude, St. Henry, St. Ita, St. Ignatius, and St. Jerome each are unique and have much beloved history. Students at NCA come from all of these parishes and meet as one as NCA STUDENTS.
- The NCA student and family population is diverse in culture and religion as all are welcome to our school. We believe that Jesus would have it no other way!
- All parishes, pastors, priests, religious, and community members play a vital role in the formation of all NCA students. We work in collaboration to share our time, treasures, and talents to help Northside Catholic Academy prepare her students for life after eighth grade!

(Revised Jan. 2008)

## From the NCA Pastors...

We are grateful to you for choosing NCA for your child's education. As parents you have the awesome task of making the right choices for your child's education here and now as well other choices that will impact their lives well into the future. Please know that we are here to assist you in any way we can as your pastors.

We have a keen interest in NCA. Each of our parishes shows our support not only by our annual subsidy to the school but also by our presence at school functions both sacramental and social. Please know that we are here for you at your home parish no matter which campus your child is attending. We encourage you to be involved not only in the NCA community but also in your parish. The more visible NCA families are involved in their parish, the better they promote the school to the larger parish community. This is why the celebration and reception of the Sacraments of First Holy Communion, First Reconciliation and Confirmation take place in your home parish. It is NCA's goal to foster and strengthen the ties between school families and their parish. You will hear in detail about these special celebrations from your home parish.

As well, you are invited to join with us for the weekly school Masses celebrated at both campuses and other special services like May Crowning and Penance Services. Just read the notices from school as to when and where they will be celebrated.

Most important in this mix is the sharing of your faith with your child. We encourage you to attend Mass on Sunday with them, to pray together before meals, to talk about what they are studying in Religion class and answer the questions they have as their faith grows and develops. Your positive example is ultimately the best of teachers for them.

With that in mind, know we are here for you as well. If your child has missed any of the sacraments, let us know. If you as parents wish to talk about your own faith concerns please call us and we will meet with you.

In return we ask for your support of the parish by your presence, your involvement, and your financial giving. In all these ways we can become the community of school and parish that will truly impact the lives of your entire family.

May God bless you, bless our parishes and bless NCA this year.

Rev. Dominic Grassi  
St. Gertrude

Rev. David Pavlik  
St. Ita

Rev. Joe Jackson  
St. Ignatius

Rev. Jeremy Thomas  
St. Jerome

Rev. Dominic Vinh Ha  
St. Henry

Rev. Paul Wachdorf  
St. Gregory the Great

## **GENERAL SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **Parish**

The school is an integral part of six parishes on the north side of Chicago: St. Gertrude; St. Gregory; St. Henry; St. Ignatius; St. Ita; and St. Jerome. Families are encouraged to participate in parish liturgies and other events sponsored by their parish.

All new Catholic families must go to their new parish Rectory to register as parishioners. Catholic families must be registered, **contributing** parishioners in order to be eligible for the special parishioner tuition rate. Parishioner status is reviewed annually by the pastors. Sacraments are celebrated in the home parish. Parents are responsible for coordinating sacramental preparations with their home parish.

### **Equal Employment Opportunities**

Northside Catholic Academy is operated under the auspices of the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, a corporation sole, in the Archdiocese of Chicago. It is the policy of Northside Catholic Academy to provide equal opportunity in employment to all employees and all applicants for employment. No person shall be discriminated against in employment by reason of such individual's race, color, sex, national origin, age, marital status, sexual orientation, military discharge, mental or physical handicap unrelated to the ability to perform the duties of the position.

### **Policy on Non-Discrimination**

Northside Catholic Academy does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin in the administration of educational, admission, hiring, tuition assistance, athletic, or other school-administered policies.

### **Harassment**

The pastors, administration and staff of North side Catholic Academy believe that all students and employees are entitled to work and study in school-related environments that are Christ-centered and free of harassment.

The school will treat complaints of harassment seriously and will respond to such complaints in a prompt, confidential and thorough manner. Harassment of any type will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. Disciplinary action may include suspension, expulsion or termination.

Retaliation in any form against an employee or student who exercises his or her right to make a complaint under this policy is strictly prohibited, and will itself be cause for appropriate disciplinary action.

Any employee or student who knowingly makes false charges against an employee or a student in an attempt to demean, harass, abuse, or embarrass that individual shall be subject to sanctions for misconduct as set forth in the Archdiocesan Policy book.

## **ADMISSION POLICIES**

### **Admission of Students**

The following will be the order of admittance each year:

- 1) Currently enrolled students and their siblings (will have at least one week of enrollment prior to opening it to new families)
- 2) Children of parishioners
- 3) Transfer students from other Catholic schools
  - a) those that are merging or consolidating
  - b) whose families have moved into the neighborhood (with a letter from former parish attesting to parishioner status while there)
- 4) Children of non-parishioners

We do reserve the right to review previous school records, contact the former school and/or to test children before admission and/or grade placement. If academic or behavioral hindrances, or outstanding financial obligations exist, admittance may be refused.

### **Entrance Requirements**

A child entering kindergarten must be five years of age and those entering first grade must be six years of age on or before September 1 of that year. Students transferring into the school will be considered for the grade level recommended by the previous school. For the admission of any new student, the parent must present:

- 1) the child's Birth Certificate
- 2) a record of current (within 6 months) physical examination, updated immunizations.
- 3) report cards, standardized test scores, and all other pertinent and/or diagnostic information for the student.

**Registration and one month's tuition are due before school begins each year.** In the case of students registering during the year, these monies are due at the time of registration. The Parent or guardian is expected to sign a financial agreement at the time of enrollment. No child will be re-admitted to Northside Catholic Academy unless all past financial obligations have been met. We hope you can understand this necessity.

Admission of students from other schools is dependent on space at their grade level and evidence of satisfactory progress in the previous school. In order to best serve all students, we expect parents to give us full information regarding the academic and emotional needs of their child. ***There will be a six-week probationary period for all new students.***

## **STUDENT RECORDS**

Northside Catholic Academy keeps a full and accurate record of each child's attendance and academic progress according to the procedures established by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools.

Policy #316.2 (**Privacy of Student Records**) The right to privacy and confidentiality of student records must be protected. The Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education has adopted guidelines to protect the privacy and confidentiality of student records.

Policy #316.3 (**Release of School Records**) School records contain confidential data and are not to be released to unauthorized persons. Requests from attorneys for a pupil's attendance or academic records or subpoena of records may be granted according to the guidelines set by the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education.

To help us serve your child, we should also have on file copies of any outside testing that is done, indications from doctors of any particular medical needs and how these are best handled, and any other information necessary for us to more successfully help your child learn and grow.

Each eighth grader is entitled to two sets of records being forwarded to the high schools of your choice, along with a completed copy of the High School Pre-Admission Form. Additional requests will carry a \$5 charge.

### **Custodial and Non-Custodial Parent Information**

Non-custodial parents have the right to information about their children, **unless court documents to the contrary are on file in our school office.** The law generally allows students and/or student records to be released to either parent, to both parents, or to legal guardians. If requested, we will mail copies of newsletters and report cards to a non-custodial parent unless there is a court decree prohibiting this. Parents should make sure the school is notified of the address or phone number change of any parent or guardian. In general, it is the responsibility of the custodial parent to keep the non-custodial parent informed of school events and activities.

### **Transferring**

Parents should notify the school in advance if they plan to transfer from Northside Catholic Academy. Health records and other student records will be forwarded to the new school upon request from the school. If financial obligations to the school have been met, the school will issue a student transfer.

## SCHOOL HOURS

The school hours vary for each campus. The schedules are:

	<u>Students</u> <u>enter</u>	<u>School</u> <u>begins</u>	<u>School</u> <u>ends</u>	<u>Half-day</u> <u>dismissal</u>
Middle School Campus	7:40	7:50	2:50	11:20
Primary Campus	8:00	8:10	3:10	11:40
Preschool Full Day	8:00	8:10	3:05	11:35
Preschool AM Half Day	8:00	8:10	11:00	11:00
Preschool PM Half Day	12:00	12:10	3:05	no school

Aside from our extended care program, there is no outside supervision provided before or after school at either campus. Parents are responsible for setting the schedule that will get their children to school on time each day. Students may NOT loiter on school grounds before or after school.

Please follow the campus rules for safe drop-off and pick-up of your children. **CHILDREN MUST CROSS THE STREET ONLY AT THE CROSSWALKS!** No parent may double park to wait for a child or park in a "No Parking" or Fire Lane area.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** When K-8 children enter the building in the morning, please allow them to go to the classroom without you. There are several reasons why this is a good way to start the day; it makes for a less emotional (and less stressful) separation, it allows the teacher and student to get a focused start to the day. Teachers need to greet their students and set the tone for the day with their class. This is NOT an acceptable time for them to be answering parent questions, etc.

**For Preschool families, we ask that when you` walk your child to their classroom, please leave them at the door to the room, and immediately leave the classroom area. This makes the separation cleaner and easier for the child.** Thank you for your cooperation.

## EXTENDED CARE

Parents may enroll their children in the NCA Extended Care Program, available from 6:30a.m. until school begins and from 3:00-6:00p.m. at the Primary Campus. Registration forms are available in the office. Students are not to be dropped off before 6:30 a.m. or picked up after 6:00 p.m. Please pay bill each Friday for that week.

On days of early dismissal, students in Extended Care must bring their own lunch and a beverage, as no hot lunch is served.

Students from either campus who are not picked up after dismissal will be delivered to the extended care program to wait for a parent or guardian to pick him/her up. The family will be charged the normal extended care rate.

## **SCHOOL BUS**

Northside Catholic Academy provides bus service to and from its six parish sites to the two campuses. Appropriate social behavior is required on the bus at all times. Inappropriate behavior distracts the bus driver and endangers the lives of other children. The privilege of riding on the school bus is conditional on a student's good behavior and observance of the following rules and regulations. Any student who violates any of these will be reported to the administration with the possibility that bus privileges may be suspended or terminated. It is the parent's obligation to see that their children board the bus safely in the morning. The school is not responsible for children prior to bus pick-up. Parents are responsible for arrangements for the safe pick-up of their children at the bus stops in the afternoons. If there is no one present at the bus stop to meet a PS-grade 4 student, the bus will return the child to the extended care program at the primary campus.

### **BUS BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Wait in a safe, designated area for the bus to arrive.
2. Obey the bus driver cheerfully and promptly.
3. Obey and respect the monitor on duty.
4. Once on the bus, fill the seats from the back to the front. (Do not save seats.)
5. Once seated, stay seated.
6. While bus is moving, stay seated, with seat belts fastened.
7. Talk quietly while on the bus.
8. Keep hands, heads and belongings inside the bus. (NEVER throw anything from the bus.)
9. Do NOT eat or drink anything while on the bus.
10. Respect the bus – keep it clean and free from damage.
11. Animals are NOT permitted on the bus at any time.
12. Middle School students must show their afternoon bus pass to board the bus after dismissal.
13. No electronic devices (cell phones, games, ipod) are to be used on bus. If they are seen they can be confiscated by the bus monitor.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES**

### **Regular Attendance**

The State of Illinois provides by law for compulsory attendance by all children between the ages of seven and sixteen. The responsibility for compliance with this law belongs to the parent, but the school is obliged to keep an accurate record of daily attendance. This record is placed in the student's file at the end of the year and remains indefinitely. *Students who are absent more than 20 times in a school year may need to be retained at the same grade level the following year.*

### Absence

If your child must be absent from school, **please call the school office no later than 8:30 a.m.** each day (s)he will be out. (If leaving a message on the school answering machine, please include the following information: child's first & last name, reason for the absence, the estimated length of the absence, and your name & relationship to the child.) This provides a valuable security measure for your child, as well as allowing our lunch count to be accurate. **A note explaining the absence must be sent when the child returns to school.** It is helpful if you are able to arrange to have homework and/or important notices brought home by a sibling or a nearby friend. *Students who are unable to attend school are also unable to attend after school or evening extra-curricular events.*

**Truancies:** Are reported to the principal, who will contact any or all of the following: the parent, emergency contact, and the local police.

**Medical/Dental Appointments:** Please try to avoid scheduling dental or medical appointments for your children during school hours. If an early dismissal for a child is unavoidable, a parent or appointed person must come to the school office to get the child. Teachers need to be notified ahead of time of the need for this special arrangement.

No student will be allowed to leave during the school day with someone other than parent/guardian without written permission of the parent. A phone call is not sufficient.

**Family Vacations:** Families are discouraged from scheduling vacations during school time. It puts any level student at a disadvantage to miss out on the work, as well as be out of step with the rhythm of the class. If such a trip is unavoidable, however, the teacher and principal must be notified well in advance. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to get necessary assignments, newsletters, forms, etc. **when the child returns to school. Please do NOT ask for assignments to be given prior to departure.**

### Tardiness

The arrival each morning of students who are consistently tardy is a disruption to the rest of the class. Students who are tardy are at a disadvantage for the rest of the day due to all the important "tone-setting" activities they miss. Parents must be responsible to see that students arrive on time! If tardiness becomes a recurring problem, parent(s) will need to come in to explain the situation, and plan for the necessary changes in the daily routines to eliminate this problem.

- **Preschool- Grade 3 Students** who are tardy must report to the office **with their parents** to be signed into school before going to their classroom.
- **Grades 4 & 5 Students** who are tardy must report to the office **with their parents** to be signed into school then escorted to the gym building by their parent.
- **Middle School Students** who are tardy must report to the office for a tardy slip in order to be admitted to class. On the third tardy in a trimester the student will be given detention. Any subsequent tardy in the trimester will also result in a detention.

### **Emergency School Closings/Problems with Bus Service**

Should severe weather (or some other emergency) require the closing of school or the cancellation of bus service, listen to one of the following radio stations from 6:30-8:00 a.m. for an announcement: WMAQ 670AM; WGN 720AM; WBBM 780AM; B96 FM; US99 FM. There would also be an announcement on television's Channel 32, and we would do our best to get the announcement on the NCA website and the Parent web Discussion Group. We would also implement the class phone tree to help convey the message.

**If all the Chicago Public Schools are closed because of weather conditions,  
Northside Catholic Academy will also be closed.**

The radio or television announcement is to be considered official.

### **Emergency DAYTIME School Closing Procedures**

In the event that school closes early due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, the following telephone tree will be used to notify parents of the school closing/emergency:

1. Authorized school personnel will contact all Lead Room Parents
2. Lead Room Parents contact Assistant Room Parents (or designated volunteers)
3. Assistant Room Parents contact remaining parents as assigned via class phone tree

It will be the responsibility of each level of contact to remain available by telephone during the duration of the school emergency closing process.

Anyone who is not able to connect with a person on their contact list must continue on with the remaining calls so that there is not a break in the chain of communication. In the event you are not able to make these calls, you must communicate that information back up to the level above you.

When you have completed all the calls in your assigned level, you must report back to the level above you so that the school will be notified when all the calls have been completed.

Room Parents will assist in compiling the telephone tree for their assigned classrooms. Each level of the phone tree will maintain copies of all the families' contact numbers so that any given level can complete the remaining telephone chain. Therefore, the school office will maintain a copy of the entire school's telephone tree. The Lead Room Parent will keep a copy of their whole class' phone tree. In addition, the Lead Room Parent will check the numbers provided against the class list supplied and report any discrepancies to the office. The Assistant Room Parents will have a shorter list of their assigned classmates' emergency contact numbers. New families to the school will get added in to the tree at the appropriate level as they enroll at NCA.

## COMMUNICATION

We try to keep families well informed about the school and your children. Each Wednesday, your YOUNGEST or ONLY NCA CHILD will bring school announcements home in a FAMILY ENVELOPE that is to be returned the following day, so we know you have received the information that was sent. (Families electing to receive the weekly newsletters via email, must still check the Family Envelope for any papers which cannot be transmitted electronically.) If letters are sent home in a sealed envelope addressed to the parent, **we expect that they will not be opened by anyone other than the parent.** It is very important that students learn to respect the wishes of the person sending the note or letter. Even if the parent will eventually share the contents of the note with the child, children should not be given permission to open letters addressed to anyone but themselves.

The school newsletter, which goes home each Wednesday, offers information about both NCA campuses, curriculum news, and announcements of school and parish activities. Please read this and let us know how we are doing at keeping you informed. Periodically, you will also hear from your child's teacher with news about the things happening in their grade or unit. We hope you will use these newsletters to better communicate with your child about the issues mentioned.

The school directory is an important means of communication between the school and families, and among families. The school directory contains the names of students and their parents, addresses, and phone numbers of all NCA students unless the school is notified in writing that the parents do not wish to be included in the directory. **The school directory is only to be used for school related matters and not for personal or business affairs of any student or parent and is not to be shared with anyone nor any business.**

Another good source of information is your Parish bulletin, distributed weekly at the Masses. Reading this will help you understand the dynamics of the parish, and keep you abreast of parish activities in which you are always welcome to participate.

YOU will also need to keep in touch with teachers about your child. Please feel free to send any questions, suggestions, or compliments via email or with your child in a note. Teachers are eager to work with you for the best educational experience for your child. The easiest way for this to happen is for you to write a note, asking for a response or suggesting times when the teacher can reach you by phone.

If more than a phone call is required, **scheduling an appointment** is the best way for both you and the teacher to be prepared to discuss your child's situation. Teachers are not free to meet every day after school due to faculty meetings, Extended Care responsibilities, or outside jobs, so please wait to see the teacher until s/he sets up a time with you.

It is important to deal with any conflict that arises in the proper manner. If your child is having difficulty in a particular class, then you should discuss it with the teacher of that class. **The principal is willing and able to discuss any concerns, however you must first discuss your concerns with the teacher involved.** Approaching those directly involved also teaches your child some things about conflict resolution and models what we expect them to do in case a conflict arises in their day-to-day school life.

The way you communicate about school in your home is also of great importance. Your children will develop many of their school attitudes based on how you discuss school issues, teachers, other students, homework assignments, etc. in their presence. We hope you will be delivering positive messages about school through your words, tone, and actions. If you have a complaint or criticism, it should be directed to whomever can do something about it - the teacher, the lunchroom supervisor, the principal, the president. We hope that the partnership between school and home will be one based on mutual respect and our shared desire to provide what's best for all of the children.

### **CONFLICT RESOLUTION/GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

All adults involved in NCA have as their main goal the success, safety, and happiness of the students of NCA. However, not every decision or plan meets with universal approval. There may be times when a student, parent, teacher, or administrator is dissatisfied with how a particular situation has been handled. If this occurs, there are several steps that can be taken, in the order listed here:

A. If the concern is with a teacher:

1. Contact the teacher, by phone or note, to discuss your concerns. Teachers do not have phones in their rooms, so you'll need to leave a message with the secretary. Make sure it's clear when and where you can be reached, preferably in the after school hours. If necessary, arrange for a face-to-face appointment with that person. Discuss the issue from your perspective and be open to the other view as well. Work toward understanding and resolving any conflict.
2. If after talking/meeting with the teacher you are not satisfied that the matter has been handled in the best way, contact the principal and discuss the situation. The principal will need to also talk with the teacher involved, and then get back to you. If possible, arrange a meeting with the principal, preferably involving the teacher as well, so all issues can be raised at one sitting.
3. Work with principal and teacher to come to some mutual understanding, and be sure all are clear on the outcomes and timelines for resolution. If necessary, allow time for the resolution or agreed-upon behaviors to take effect.
4. If there is still an issue, you can contact NCA's President (Fr. Dominic Grassi) to further discuss the situation. He will involve the principal in discussion and try to reach a resolution to which all parties can agree.

5. Archdiocesan intervention is available only after all the preceding steps have been followed in good faith.

B. If the concern is with the Principal:

1. Contact the principal to talk through your concern. Be able to state your desired outcome of the situation and hear the desired outcome of the principal. Work toward an agreeable solution, with timelines or ways to check progress, if necessary. Follow up at the agreed-upon date.
2. If not satisfied, contact the NCA President (Fr. Dominic Grassi). He will follow up with the principal and get back to you.
3. If there is still not satisfaction, a parent/guardian may contact the Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Schools to ask for assistance. The Assistant Superintendent for Vicariate II would contact the principal to discuss your concerns, only if the above steps have been taken.

Throughout any grievance procedure, it is important that all adults maintain respect for each other and for the student(s) involved in the issue. We expect that students will not hear either their parent/guardian or their teacher speaking disrespectfully about each other, no matter what disagreement the adults may have. This will help maintain the sense of a respectful community that we want to encourage in all parts of our school.

Prayer can also play an important role in conflict resolution. Teachers, students, parents, and administrators need to take the time to ask for God's blessing and wisdom as they begin to look at all sides of an issue. This act of calming oneself and seeking God's intervention sometimes clears the air of some of the tension and makes it possible for people to discuss in a calmer, more productive manner.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Emergency Cards**

Every student **MUST** have an "Emergency Card" on file in the school office. Please keep the school and your child's classroom Room Parent informed throughout the year of any changes of telephone numbers, addresses, or work phone numbers so the emergency contact information will always be accurate. Also, be sure you have spoken to those people whom you list as emergency contacts, so they know what you'd like them to do if we are unable to reach you. With so much office communication via voice-mail, it is sometimes difficult for the school to reach an actual person when there is a school emergency. Please try to have at least one of the numbers leading to someone who could get to the school to pick up the child if necessary.

### **Health Records**

Students entering pre-school, kindergarten, sixth grade, all new students, and any student participating in an NCA sports program are required to have a record of a current (within past six months) physical examination and updated immunization records in accordance with Archdiocesan policy and state law. Students in Kindergarten, grade 2 and grade 6 are required to have a current dental record in the file in accordance with Archdiocesan policy and state law. These records are kept on file in the student's folder in the school office. Students who do not have the necessary medical information must, by state law, be excluded from school until such records are brought in.

### **Restricted Activity Due to Medical Problem**

If the activities of a student need to be restricted in any way, it is necessary to have a **written statement from the doctor** informing the school of the nature of the restrictions and how long they will exist. The information is shared with the gym teacher or whoever needs to see it.

To maintain good health, children need to get fresh air, and whenever possible, we will take students outside for recess. **Unless a doctor's note requesting otherwise has been submitted, every child will go outside with the class.**

### **Reporting Child Abuse**

The State of Illinois lists all school personnel as **MANDATED** reporters. This means school personnel are **required by law** to inform the Department of Children Family Services of any suspicions or allegations of child abuse/neglect.

### **Medication**

**NO MEDICATION WILL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE PRINCIPAL, FACULTY MEMBERS, OR ANY SCHOOL PERSONNEL UNLESS A COMPLETED MEDICATION AUTHORIZATION FORM IS ON FILE IN THE SCHOOL OFFICE.** This is in compliance with Archdiocesan policy and state law. No student may have medication on his/her person or in a desk, locker, coatroom, or backpack.

If a prescription or over-the-counter medication is needed, a Medication Authorization Form, signed by a physician, must be on file in the school office. If a student must bring medication to school, it must have the prescription label, including Rx number, student name, medication, dosage, direction for administration, date and refill schedule, pharmacy label, and name/initials of pharmacist; or the manufacturer's label for non-prescription medication. All medicine containers are brought to the school office immediately upon student's arrival in the morning.

If it is absolutely necessary for a child to take medication and there is no medication Authorization Form on file, the parent must come in and dispense the medication to the child.

Students with severe asthma/allergies may need to have their inhaler with them at all times. In such cases the bottom portion of the Physician Request for Self-Administration of Medication MUST be on file in the school office.

If your child needs cough drops or throat lozenges during the day due to a cold, please send a note stating that fact. Children without a note will not be allowed to chew on these during school.

### **Infectious Disease**

To ensure the effectiveness of the school health program, report immediately any case of infectious disease (lice, strep throat, ear infections, chicken pox, "pink eye", etc.). Parents with children in that homeroom will be notified of the situation (without identifying the infected child by name) so that they may watch for symptoms in their children. Do not send your child to school until medication has been used for these conditions. When children are home due to chicken pox, please keep them there until at least 2 days after fresh spots appear. **Also, if your child has a fever, s/he should be at home until fever-free for 24 hours. No exceptions!** Please help keep our school a healthy place.

### **Children's Safety**

The safety of our children is a continuing responsibility of home, school, and community. Hazards to children's safety require constant vigilance. PLEASE urge your children:

- To go to and from school by the safest, direct route.
- Not to hang around the school or parish buildings or nearby alleys after dismissal.
- Not to take short cuts through alleys, yards, etc.
- To notice strangers hanging around and tell an adult
- To report immediately any problems they have going to or from school.

After school, parents or older brothers and sisters should wait in the designated areas for their children or siblings to be dismissed. It is helpful if parents stand clear of all doors at dismissal time. Parents can also help assure school safety in these ways:

1. **NEVER DOUBLE PARK** when dropping off or picking up your child.
2. Be sure your child is crossing the street only at the crosswalk.
3. Do not pull your car into places where students walk or play.
4. Make sure your child knows his/her full name, address, and phone number, as well as a parent's name.
5. Any changes in your child's dismissal routine should be sent to the teacher **in writing**.

## **SCHOOL DISCIPLINE CODES**

The purpose of discipline is to promote self-control. A positive, respectful approach to discipline is the hallmark of a Catholic school. The word "discipline" comes from the word disciple. Christ told us how to recognize His disciples: "They shall have love for one another." Northside Catholic Academy shall be a place where:

- every person is respected regardless of age, gender, race, religion or ethnicity

- students, staff and administrators work to help each other
- all exhibit the love and concern of Christ Himself, for Christ is indeed alive in our school

### **Philosophy Regarding Learning and Discipline**

Optimum learning occurs in a positive, safe, and secure environment. Students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators, and other school staff all share in the responsibility to ensure a positive climate for learning.

The school setting enables students to develop responsible behaviors and habits that will serve them now and later in life. Proper training in discipline should lead towards self-control and respect for law, authority, property, and the rights of others.

While self-discipline is the ideal, it is understood that corrective measures will be required at times. When it becomes necessary to enforce the consequences of discipline violations as outlined in this policy, it should be done in a manner that respects the dignity of the student and promotes healthy and responsible behavior.

Discipline is a learning experience, not a punishment. Discipline . . .

- Helps the student learn a lesson that will positively affect his or her present and future behavior.
- Is designed to help the student control and change his or her behavior, thereby guiding the student into adulthood.
- Helps the student to grow intellectually and emotionally.
- Enhances the student's self-confidence, self-worth, and self-image.

### **Behavior Expectations**

Northside Catholic Academy is committed to providing quality education to students in a safe and respectful environment. The school-wide expectation for all students is:

***I will act in a safe and respectful way.***

NCA has established the following school-wide expectations to foster respectful attitudes, encourage safe behaviors, and develop responsibility.

1. Be Safe.
2. Be Respectful.
3. Be Responsible.

These expectations and rules help guide behavior in the school, on the playground, in church and on the bus. The behaviors that exemplify these expectations will be clearly defined and taught. Redirection and appropriate consequences will be applied when needed.

### **Substance Abuse Policy**

A drug policy has been established at Northside Catholic Academy to send a clear message to students, parents, and community that Northside Catholic Academy has established and intends to maintain a drug free environment for all students.

The primary purpose of Northside Catholic Academy is to promote the spiritual, intellectual, psychological, social and physical development of its students. Since the use of alcohol and other drugs by young people is illegal and interferes with both learning and healthy development, Northside Catholic Academy will promote and maintain a drug-free environment for all its students. When possible, the school will cooperate with community efforts to promote a non-use policy and to offer healthy alternatives to use of drugs. In addition, smoking is prohibited at all school functions.

No student may possess or use any illegal substances (cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, and inhalants) in school or at school-sponsored events. Students are also prohibited from possessing prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs on school property.

If a student is found using or possessing or suspected of using or possessing an illegal substance, that student will be brought to the principal's office immediately. Parents will be notified immediately and a conference held as soon as possible. Disciplinary actions will be discussed at the time of the conference.

A student found selling an alleged illegal substance at school or at a school sponsored function shall be subject to immediate suspension and/or expulsion. The proper authorities, including parent(s) and police, will be notified.

The student's right to privacy will be observed at all times. Any student seeking information or help for a drug or alcohol abuse problem will be provided with the appropriate information for the purpose of obtaining help.

### **Weapons Policy**

Students and non-students, including adults and visiting youths, are forbidden to knowingly or voluntarily possess, store in an area subject to one's control, handle, transmit or use any instrument that is considered a weapon or "look-alike" weapon in school, on school grounds, at school activities, at bus stops, on buses, or at school events.

The procedure for any student found to be in possession of a weapon or "look alike" is as follows:

1. Confiscation of the weapon or "look alike"
2. Notification of the principal
3. Notification of the parent/guardian
4. Notification of Police
5. Disciplinary action.

A student who finds a weapon on the way to school, on school property, or in the school building and takes it immediately to the principal’s office or to an adult staff member will not be considered in possession of a weapon. Appropriate measures shall be taken in these cases.

The administration reserves the right to act on any and all conduct inside and outside the school that is deemed inappropriate or detrimental to members of the school community or to NCA’s reputation. The administration has the prerogative to restrict any activity, social trends, or fad that would be inappropriate to building a strong academic, Christian atmosphere.

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students who attend NCA have various rights and opportunities. Students also have responsibilities to teachers, other staff, and fellow students. The following list lays out student rights and opportunities as well as student responsibilities.

### **Learning**

<i><b>Rights/Opportunities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
Students should have the opportunity to receive a comprehensive, appropriate education.	Students are responsible for daily attendance, for completing class assignments on time and for bringing appropriate materials required for class use.
Students should have the opportunity to attend school in a safe environment that is free from disruptive behavior by others.	Students are responsible to behave in such a manner that does not pose a potential, or actual danger to themselves or others, and that is not disruptive to the learning process of others.
Students have the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed during an <b>excused absence</b> .	Students are responsible to obtain and complete make up work assigned for periods of absence.

### **Fair Treatment**

<i><b>Rights/Opportunities</b></i>	<i><b>Responsibilities</b></i>
Students have the right to due process when involved in a violation of school rules. Included is the opportunity to hear the nature of the violation and give their account of the situation.	Students are responsible to treat all persons respectfully and to follow the rules and regulations that apply to them.
Students have the right to be informed of current school policies, rules and regulations that apply to them.	Students are responsible to be knowledgeable about and to follow school policies, rules and regulations that apply to them.
Students have the right to be informed of classroom expectations.	Students are responsible to be knowledgeable about and to meet classroom expectations and evaluation procedures that apply to them.
Students have the right to be treated respectfully by staff and other students.	Students are responsible to treat others, including other students and staff, in a respectful manner. Students are also expected to treat the property of others and the school

	responsibly.
Students have a right to be free from corporal punishment by staff.	Students have the responsibility to refrain from using force or physical contact for the purposes of inflicting physical and emotional harm on another.
Students have a right to be free from unreasonable physical contact from teachers and other staff except when physical restraint is necessary to prevent the student from injuring self, other persons or property.	Students have the responsibility to respect the space and freedom of those around them. Students also have the responsibility to not engage in conduct that threatens to injure themselves, other persons or property.

## Harassment

<i>Rights/Opportunities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Students have the right to be free from any form of harassment arising out of the physical or verbal conduct of other students, school staff or others.	Students are responsible for maintaining an environment free from harassment, intimidation, and abuse. Students are also responsible to report incidents of physical, sexual, and verbal harassment, intimidation, and/or abuse that they have experienced, or of which they are aware. Such reports should be made to the principal.

## Student Government

<i>Rights/Opportunities</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Students have the opportunity to participate in student government. The purpose of the existence of student government is to represent, and to be responsive, to the needs of all students.	Student government representatives have the responsibility to communicate with the student body, the faculty, and administration, and to be aware of and comply with any policies of the school that may affect the formation of procedural aspects of the student government.

As it is impossible to anticipate all types of inappropriate behavior, the administration reserves the right to enact disciplinary action on adverse conduct not specifically mentioned in this handbook.

The discipline code exists to help provide a safe, positive environment in which students can learn and grow. The teachers and administrators expect parents will help students to accept responsibility for the choices they make and accept the consequences when infractions occur.

**Cell Phones** We discourage the bringing of cell phones to school. If necessary, the phones are to be turned off and handed in at the office before school begins. **Cell phone use is not allowed at any time during the school day or on the school bus.** Cell phones will be taken from students who violate this rule and a parent will need to come to pick the phone up from the principal. Children are not to make or receive phone calls or text messages during the day. If a parent or guardian needs to get in touch with a child during the school day, they should call the office and the message will be relayed. NCA is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged cell phones.

**Miscellaneous Items** Items such as i-pods, electronic games/books, cameras, or other toys should not be brought to school. NCA will not be liable for items brought from home should they become lost, stolen or broken.

### **POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF THE BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Continuous or overt disregard of any school rule will result in appropriate disciplinary action. The purpose of disciplinary action is to help the student accept more responsibility for his or her own actions and to become more self-disciplined. Discipline will be determined by the teachers and principal. Minor offenses are usually handled by a verbal warning from a teacher or staff member. The homeroom teacher will keep a record of frequency of minor offenses. Where warranted, discipline problems may require a meeting with parents and/or the intervention of the principal.

### **SERIOUS BEHAVIOR VIOLATIONS**

- Persistent classroom disruption
- Fighting
- Snowball or rock throwing
- Disrespect of school personnel, school supervisors, and lunchroom monitors
- Use of cell phone during school hours or on the school bus
- Dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism
- Abusive or foul language
- Forgery of a parent or guardian's signature
- Harassment of students or school personnel
- Conduct unbecoming a Christian student
- Inappropriate behavior during a fire/disaster drill
- Bullying – the intentional and repeated harm to another's body, property, self-esteem, and/or to group's acceptance

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR SERIOUS BEHAVIOR VIOLATIONS**

*First Offense:* Detention

*Second Offense:* Detention and parent conference

*Third Offense:* Detention and conference with parent, student, teacher and principal

These steps will be followed on a cumulative basis for all offenses listed as serious behavior violations. After the third offense for serious violations, further violations will result in detention as well as in-school suspension. Continued violations may result in out-of-school suspension.

The following actions could result in an immediate suspension and possible expulsion from school. Police will be notified if warranted. Family or individual counseling may be recommended or required.

1. Deliberate destruction, abuse, or theft of personal, public or school property.
2. Carrying weapons or a "look alike"

3. Use or possession of tobacco, matches or lighters
4. Harassment (repeated disrespect and/or intimidation of others)
5. Use or possession of alcohol and/or drugs in school or at school-related activities
6. Gang affiliation, recruitment or any activity on or off school premises that may be gang related
7. Assault of a student or school personnel

A **Detention** is an additional half hour in school. Detentions will be served one day a week as designated by the principal or assistant principal. Students who arrive late to detention will be assigned an additional detention.

1. Detention slips are to be signed by the parent or guardian and returned to the teacher the following day. If a student is unable to report for the assigned detention, a written excuse before the day of detention, from the parent, must be presented and another date will be assigned. There will always be at least 24 hours notice prior to an assigned detention.
2. Unexcused absence from detention will result in two detention periods being assigned.
3. Continued disregard of school rules, policies or the unwillingness to respond to corrective measures may result in expulsion. Expulsion may also be warranted when the student has acted in serious violation of school policies as outlined.

**SUSPENSION** is defined as a period of time in which the student may not attend class or extra-curricular activities. Ordinarily, suspensions are “in-school” suspensions.

**EXPULSION** is defined as a permanent dismissal of a student from the school. This action will be imposed only after serious deliberation of the pastor and administration.

### **DRESS CODE**

Northside Catholic Academy students are expected to dress appropriately for school. The following dress requirements have been established so that students become accustomed to a norm of neatness and modesty that will be expected of them in the world of work and so that they experience a sense of belonging to the Northside Catholic Academy community.

Enrollment at NCA implies agreement with, and acceptance of, the dress code policies. Decisions on dress code matters are at the sole discretion of the Principal. Students will receive warnings on the first two violations and letters will go home explaining to parents what the violation(s) were. Upon the third violation the student will receive a detention. On the fourth violation a parent/guardian will be asked to pick up the student so that they may return home to change into the appropriate uniform. Failure of students to return to class will result in an absence.

**SCHOOL UNIFORM - Year Round**

<b><i>Girls K-8</i></b>	<b><i>Boys K-3</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaid Jumper with White Collared Shirt (Kindergarten ONLY)</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plaid Skirt/Skort with White Monogrammed Collared Shirt <b><u>or</u></b> Plain White Collared Shirt with Monogrammed Sweater/Vest</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Pants with White Monogrammed Collared Shirt <b><u>or</u></b> Plain White Collared Shirt with Monogrammed Sweater/Vest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Pants with White Monogrammed Collared Shirt <b><u>or</u></b> Plain White Collared Shirt with Monogrammed Sweater/Vest</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Shorts with White Monogrammed Collared Shirt <b><u>or</u></b> Plain White Collared Shirt with Monogrammed Sweater/Vest</li> </ul>

**GYM UNIFORM**

<b><i>Girls &amp; Boys K-5</i></b>	<b><i>Girls &amp; Boys 6-8</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Sweatpants and Navy Blue T-Shirt with NCA Logo</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Shorts and Navy Blue T-Shirt with NCA Logo</li> <li>• Gym Shoes</li> <li>• <u>OPTIONAL</u>- Navy Blue Sweatshirt with NCA Logo</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Sweatpants and Gray T-Shirt with NCA Logo</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b><u>OR</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Navy Blue Shorts and Gray T- Shirt with NCA Logo</li> <li>• Gym Shoes</li> <li>• <u>OPTIONAL</u>- Navy Blue Sweatshirt with NCA Logo</li> </ul>
<b>Spirit Wear and Hoodies are NOT allowed</b>	

**GENERAL STANDARDS:**

- Neatness, cleanliness, moderation and modesty should guide appearance.
- No article of clothing may be thrown around the waist or over the shoulders.
- All outerwear must be placed in the student's locker upon arrival at school. It is not to be brought to class.
- No ripped or torn clothing.

**SHIRTS/BLOUSES:** Standardized dress code shirts/blouses must be worn by students during the school day. Shirts may be short sleeved or long sleeved. Shirts must always be tucked in for grades 4-8. Any shirt/blouse that exposes the midriff is inappropriate. Solid white shirts may be worn under the uniform shirt. Undershirts may not extend past the uniform shirt sleeve.

**PANTS/SHORTS:** Students may only wear traditional classic cut or relaxed fit chinos, often referred to as khaki or Docker's style, with flat or pleated fronts. Students are required to wear the waist of the pants at the navel and they must extend to the ankles. The pants/shorts must always completely cover underwear/boxers. No jean styled pants regardless of the material, and no velour, fleece, lounge pants, sweatpants, cargo pants/shorts, corduroys or pants with drawstrings. Pants may not be worn under skirts. Shorts under skirts should not extend past the hem of the skirt. Skirts/Shorts/Skorts must be no more than 2 inches above the knee.

**SOCKS:** Socks are always to be worn in school. Socks must be visible above shoes. No inappropriate stockings (i.e Thigh-High, fishnet, patterned, etc.). Only solid color leggings or hose are to be worn and they must cover the entire leg.

**SHOES:** Rubber soled and non-marking shoes are preferred. If applicable, shoe laces must always be tied. No shoes with heels in excess of 2 inches. No shoes with built in rollers are allowed anywhere on the school campus. Open toe or open heel shoes, moccasins, sandals, slippers, clogs, ballerina or any type of boot are inappropriate for school.

**HAIR/HEAD COVERINGS:** Hats are not to be worn in the building at any time. Hats with inappropriate logos will be confiscated and parents will be asked to pick them up from the principal. Only natural hair colors are acceptable. Hairstyles must be neat, clean and well-groomed. Hair must be kept out of the eyes.

**JEWELRY:** The wearing of jewelry is not allowed. The only exceptions are religious medals and wristwatches and small pierced post earrings, one per earlobe (for girls only).

**BEAUTY PRODUCTS:** Makeup is **NOT** allowed. Nails must be kept neat, clean and well-groomed. If nail polish is applied only one color should be used for all nails.

#### **DRESS CODE FOR OUT OF UNIFORM DAYS**

- Any writing on clothing must be acceptable and in good taste
- Any garment, regardless of type, should not communicate a message that conflicts with the mission and values of NCA.

#### **DRESS CODE FOR FIELD TRIPS**

- The NCA school uniform is to be worn on all field trips.

## LUNCH PROGRAM

Northside Catholic Academy maintains lunchrooms under the provisions of the Archdiocesan School Lunch Program and the requirements of the City of Chicago Board of Health. A student may order hot lunch in advance or bring lunch from home. Monthly menus and order forms are sent home with the student. Milk is included with the hot lunch or it may be ordered as a separate item. All lunch and milk payments are made monthly. *Parents and students can not assume that late orders will be accepted or that there will be extra lunches available on any given day.*

We encourage families to apply for free or reduced lunch by filling out the government forms completely. If you meet the federal guidelines, you will be informed of your new lunch rate. These forms must be filled in every year for families to be considered for the reduced rates. **Families approved for free/reduced lunches still must fill out an order form every month, with selections made for every day. Failure to submit an order on time may result in no lunch being available to your child for the month.**

## CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION

We are proud to offer a complete curriculum for the students at Northside Catholic Academy. From Preschool through 8th grade, we strive to develop the academic, spiritual, social, emotional, and physical aspects of our students. Our goal is to help each young person be ready to face the challenges of life with a solid academic foundation, well-developed thinking and reasoning skills, and a strong moral base.

Our school is structured into four "Units": PK-K, Gr. 1-3; Gr. 4-5; and Gr. 6-8. The teachers follow the Archdiocesan curriculum which is aligned to the state standards. The basics of our curriculum are: Religion, Language Arts (reading, writing, spelling, phonics, handwriting), Math, Social Studies, and Science. All students receive instruction in Music, Physical Education, Spanish, Art and Computer once or twice each week.

Curriculum is planned among the teachers based on local and state guidelines, and using national standards developed in various subject areas. In addition, the entire staff is focusing on developing lessons and strategies that will allow for differentiated instruction at all levels. This means working to create lessons that allow students to learn at their own instructional levels and according to their own learning styles- which vary greatly in any given classroom!

We believe that children learn successfully in many different ways, and vary the approaches used in the classroom to fit the educational needs of the situation and the students. At times, instruction is offered to the whole group, other times to small groups, and sometimes to individuals. Our teachers are committed to using a variety of strategies as they work with your children. Your child may learn:

- to compare and contrast using Venn diagrams;
- basic Math concepts through hands-on activities with various objects that can be grouped or regrouped in meaningful ways;
- basic and complex reading skills using selections from anthologies, a short book, a novel, play or poetry;

- to pray formally, informally, with Scripture as a base, or through guided meditation.

### **Homework**

It is expected that students will do homework. The amount and kind will vary according to the age and ability of the student. Homework can include: written assignments, silent or oral reading practice, reviewing work covered in class, finishing class assignments, practicing math facts, working on a book report or other long term project, studying for a test, or independent reading.

Students may expect homework nightly Monday through Thursday. No regular homework will be given on Fridays. Older students may have long-range assignments that need work on the weekends, and certainly should use the weekends to prepare for upcoming tests or to complete any late assignments, however no work or tests should be scheduled to be due on Monday. The amount of homework your child can expect is:

Grade K	15-20 minutes of daily reading with adult.
Grade 1	10-15 minutes
Grade 2	15 - 30 minutes
Grade 3,4	30 - 45 minutes
Grade 5	1 hour
Grades 6-8	Generally 1-2 hours, including time allotted for studying for tests. Long range assignments would be in addition to this.

All students in Grades 3-8 are given an assignment notebook for writing their work down. **These should be used EVERY day.**

### **Parent Involvement with Homework**

As much as you want to help your child, please know that it is the responsibility of each CHILD to complete his/her own assignments. You can help them develop that responsibility in the following ways:

1. See that books and materials come home regularly. Look at the assignment notebook and see if all the work listed has been completed. Use it to send notes to teachers.
2. See that your child does homework in a quiet, well-lit atmosphere.
3. Look at the completed written work. Does it look as if thought and effort went into it? Ask your child questions like: "Is there a way you can make that answer clearer? Do you have anything else to say about that question? Have you checked the Math problems in the last column?"
4. **DO NOT GIVE YOUR CHILD THE ANSWERS TO THEIR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS!** Homework is practice for skills learned in school. It is feedback for the teacher to adjust instruction if students are not understanding what has been taught. If your child does not know how to do the assigned work on his/her own, it is important that the teacher know that. If answers are supplied at

- home, the teacher will expect the child to perform similarly in school, and both teacher and student will become very frustrated.
5. Ask your child to **SHOW** you what is being learned in school. Ask for explanations about how they arrived at their Math answers, or to explain the word they just defined, or to show you how they skimmed to find the answer in the text. It would help if you encouraged your child to understand it's not just answers we're looking for, but **HOW** they got them.
  6. Have a time set aside every night for reading in your home. Every family member needs to model the importance of reading. You might be reading the newspaper, a document from work, or your newest novel while your child reads his/her latest Reading story, chapter of the novel being studied, or library book.
  7. Make learning a fun part of everyday life. Make regular visits to the Public Library, local museums and parks, and teach your children about our city.
  8. Parents have the right to set time limits on how long their child will work on homework on a given night. If the limit is reached, the parent can have the child stop and put it away. The parent should send a note to the child's teacher indicating the reason the homework was not completed. There will be **NO** consequence for the child for having incomplete homework, as long as there is a note from the parent.

### **Missing Homework Policy for Middle School Students**

As homework is an important tool in reinforcing skills learned as well as giving feedback on that learning to the teachers, it is not an option for students to simply not turn in their homework. All assignments must be completed. Students who do not have their homework assignment with them in class when it is due, will be issued a missing assignment notice which needs to be signed by a parent or guardian and returned to the issuing teacher the next day. (Failure to return the signed notice, will result in the teacher calling the parent or guardian during the day. The signed notice is due to ensure that parents/guardians are aware of the missing work.)

Students who have missing assignments must bring their work with them to lunch. They will sit at designated Homework tables to eat and then begin work.

### **Missing Assignment Passes:**

Students (like all of us) are not perfect. Situations at home or simple forgetfulness can happen. At the start of each trimester, each student will be issued a sheet of Missed Assignment Passes. There will be one pass for each content area and 3 miscellaneous passes. The student may use these passes at any time during a trimester but only for an overnight homework assignment – no long term projects or makeup tests qualify for the pass. To use the pass, the student must cut out the specific pass, fill out the back of the pass and submit it to the teacher. The student will still need to do the assignment and turn it in within 24 hours, but there will be no penalty toward the student's grade. If the assignment is turned in within 24 hours, the student will not need to report to the lunchroom missing assignment tables. If it is not turned in within 24 hours, a missing assignment notice will be issued.

At the end of the trimester, students will be able to write their names on the back of any of their unused passes and put them in a raffle. This will hopefully motivate students to not use the passes unless absolutely necessary.

### **Evaluation**

An important aspect of our educational program is the ongoing evaluation of the students by the teachers. Teachers are constantly seeing changes and growth in the students, and these observations are an important part of how they can work better with your child.

Students may be required to keep a portion of their work in a portfolio as a way to observe their own development in that area. No evaluation system can adequately describe the work or ability of a student, nor can any one system fully capture the whole child. We do hope to present to you an accurate picture of your child as a learner.

Report cards, which are one form of evaluation, are given three times per year. These evaluations are based on direct observation of the student's participation in the class, oral and written class work, effort, and homework.

The first report card is presented to the parent before the November parent-teacher-student conference. Conferences will also be held near the beginning of the third trimester. Students in Preschool through Grade 2 receive a non-graded report card. We recognize and respect the developmental nature of learning. It is important for young children to focus on the steps they need to take to become successful learners, not on letter grades or averages.

Students in Grades 3-8 are graded on the following scale:

- A = 93 - 100%
- B = 85 - 92
- C = 77 - 84
- D = 69 - 76
- U = 68 and below

Midway through each trimester, students in Gr. 3-8 receive Progress Reports indicating how they are performing academically and behaviorally at that point. These progress reports serve to notify parents and students about things that are going well and about those areas where improvement is suggested before the end of the term. ALL students must bring their signed progress report back to the school the following day.

The Terra Nova Achievement Tests will be taken by students in grades 3-8 in the spring, and are another measure of each child's school performance. These tests compare your child's performance on a test to the performance of same-aged children across the country. These tests are separate from in-class testing and are not included in report card grading in any way.

### **Promotion**

Children are promoted to the next grade on the basis of achievement, academic ability, effort, personal growth, and readiness. Since all children do not reach the same level of academic or social maturity at the same time, it may, on rare occasions, be advisable for a child to be retained in a grade. When retention is being considered, many conversations will take place involving the teacher, parent(s), principal, and where appropriate, outside counselors or resource people.

### **Special Needs**

There are times when students have special learning or emotional needs which require services not easily provided by the classroom teacher. Students requiring such services may be referred to our counselor or outside resources for diagnostic or psychological testing. Teachers and parents then attend a staffing when testing is complete, for all to discuss the best way to meet any identified needs.

Students may receive "modified" grades or narratives in some subjects if the classroom teacher has modified the student's performance expectations based on recommendations in an IEP or 504 plan.

There are times when it is in the best interest of the child, the family, and/or the entire class that we admit that NCA is not the best place to handle certain problems a child may be experiencing. If that situation occurs, we will do our best to help a family to find a more suitable school for their child.

### **Library Materials**

Please help us to teach your student to be responsible for library materials. Library books should be cared for and returned promptly when they are due. Fines will not be incurred for late books, however students may not check out other books if they have over-dues. Books are considered lost if they are three weeks overdue and bills will be sent home. Lost books must be paid for in full plus a \$5.00 processing fee. (Please note that we would always rather have the book back, so if the book is returned in good condition within a year after cost has been paid, the student will be reimbursed.) Damaged books will be billed in the same way. A book is considered "damaged" if it is returned to the library in a condition that requires extensive repair or is unable to be repaired and cannot be returned to circulation. Damage will be assessed by the library staff and they will determine if the book can be repaired or not. A damaged bar code will incur a \$3.00 fee whether or not the book is damaged.

### **Use of Technology at NCA**

Electronic information resources are available to all students at Northside Catholic Academy. Our goal, in providing electronic services to students, is to promote educational excellence by facilitating the use of a vast amount of resources, innovation, communications and acceptable use. Each student and parent/guardian will be required to sign and return an agreement outlining their promise for using NCA technology appropriately.

Student's use of the Internet is monitored. It is also our primary goal to provide a safe environment for all children to learn. The expansion of technology continues at a rapid pace. Remember, it is not limited to computers, but includes cell phones, digital cameras, as well as other mechanical devices. Students who abuse acceptable use will be subject to discipline and/or fine. To qualify for electronic information resource services, students must be willing to abide by the rules of acceptable use. Please work with us in helping your child understand and abide by these simple but important rules of appropriate use. **THANK YOU!**

**For the Student – Acceptable Use:**

Acceptable use means that a student at Northside Catholic Academy will promise to use the computer and those special learning tools and programs, such as the Internet, with respect. Acceptable use means a student will promise to abide by the school and Archdiocesan rules as outlined here. These rules will be taught by the teachers. Students must:

- Remember to show respect for property, others and self. What students write or receive, using computers, may be viewed by others with or without the student knowing. Students must not vandalize or abuse the equipment, the software or any information. The computer and electronic resources belong to Northside Catholic Academy.
- Not do things on the computer that would be against the rules, the law, or may be looked upon as dishonest or disrespectful. Any student using the Internet **MUST** follow the rules given by the school and teacher at all times while on school premises. If students violate these directions and go to sites that are considered inappropriate they will be disciplined immediately by detention, suspension and possible expulsion. The severity of the discipline will be at the discretion of school administration.
- Not tell or show others any personal or family information over the Internet. Do not pretend to be another person or use another person's information. Keep personal information private.
- No Cyber Bullying/Cyber Bashing will be allowed. Discipline applied for this offense will be at the discretion of school administration.
- No cameras or cell phone or I-pods are allowed at school. Students that bring cell phones to school can leave them in the office or their backpack. If a child is caught with any of these items, the item will be confiscated. The parent/guardian will be notified to come to school to pick up the confiscated item(s).

## **EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

To provide students an opportunity to exercise some of their non-academic interests, the following extra-curricular activities are available during or after school.

**Student Leadership** - Exists in order to develop student leadership, encourage school spirit, and help promote good citizenship. Participation is open to students in Grade 4-8. Each grade 4-8 homeroom will have representatives attend meetings and plan activities. An Inauguration Mass is held near the beginning of the school year for all students in Grades 4-8, to specifically bless those who will act as student leaders throughout the year.

**Band** - Students in grades 3-8 can participate in this program, which includes weekly lessons and special performances during the year. Lesson and instrument rental fees are handled through Mr. Russell St. Germain, the NCA Band Director.

**Athletics** - Students are encouraged to further develop themselves physically and in sportsmanship through participation in our Athletic Program, which includes basketball, flag football, volleyball, and cross-country. Membership on an NCA team requires strict adherence to the Athletic Code of Conduct, which emphasizes sports as secondary to schoolwork, and sportsmanship as more important than victories. We ask the parents of students participating in our Athletic Program to get involved as well. NCA Athletic Programs and athletes must comply with Archdiocesan and Council II4A Athletic Guidelines. Parents and students are required to sign their agreement to follow policies as well as to perform some service hours related to their child's team, such as coaching, working concessions booths during games, taking tickets, etc.

**Smiling Strings** – Students in Gr. 1-8 have access to lessons on string instruments if there is enough interest in the program.

**Rainbows for All God's Children** - Many of our students have experienced the loss of a family member through divorce or death. Students who are interested in discussing feelings, getting support from other kids who share their experience, are encouraged to participate in this program, facilitated by our school counselor.

**Art, Drama, Chess, and Guitar** - When possible, after school classes are offered to students at various grade levels. There may be a separate fee for these classes.

## **MISCELLANEOUS**

### **Birthdays**

A treat for the entire class may be brought to celebrate a student's birthday. For the sake of time and convenience, the treat must be very simple and preferably healthy. **DO NOT send cakes, drinks, prizes or party materials.** Students may distribute invitations in school ONLY if all students of that child's sex in the class are being invited to the gathering. Otherwise, this should be handled outside of the school day so no bad feelings are created.

**Birthday Book Club** provides a way to honor a child's birthday by making a donation to the school library. The librarian collects all donations and purchases books which get special notations inside with the name and birth date of the child. The book stays in the child's classroom for the year and then is part of the permanent library collection.

### **Field Trips**

Field trips are an integral part of a child's education, and help students relate what is being learned in the classroom to the "outside world". The school requires written permission from a parent before taking the students away from the school. Field trips are not considered holidays, and all students are required to be in school on field trip days. There will be times when classes travel from one NCA campus to another for special events, projects, etc. Parents will be notified in advance of any such "excursions" to the other campus, however permission slips will not be sent home.

### **Fire/Bus Evacuation/ Tornado Drills**

Local fire regulations state that a fire drill must be held every month. The classroom and school conduct additional drills in September to be sure students know the routines for exiting buildings quickly and quietly. Families should also discuss fire safety plans for home as well. The bus evacuation drill is run every September for all students in the school. Tornado drills are run in March for the entire school.

### **Interruptions**

Classroom activity should not be interrupted by parents "making deliveries". If forgotten materials are brought to school by a parent, the child's name and homeroom number should be clearly marked on them. Secretaries will get the item to the student's room.

### **Lost & Found**

All clothing, backpacks, and school items should be labeled with your child's name. Label lunch boxes, pencil cases, etc. Please have your child check with the campus secretary if s/he is missing school items.

### **Respecting Property in School**

Students are required to treat all the books, materials, furniture, etc. of school in a careful and respectful manner. It is up to parents to help us reinforce the importance of handling things in a way that will allow them to be reused, or to last for a good amount of time. Students will be responsible for books they deface, furniture they mark up, etc. Library books should be treated with special care and should always be returned when due. These are good habits for you to help your child develop. In addition, students who cause extra repair due to misuse of computers may be held responsible for repair costs.

### **School Supplies**

Each student is required to have certain school supplies on hand AT ALL TIMES to be an effective learner in his/her classroom. Please help your child keep track of when it's time to replenish supplies (Christmas is a great time to find a new box of crayons, markers, or glue stick in the stocking!)

### Use of School Telephone

Unless there is an emergency, there should be no calls made home by students during the day. Supplies, assignments, or books that have been left at home are the **student's** responsibility. Plans for after school visits to friend's homes must be made outside of school. Students and teachers will not be called to the phone during class. If necessary, a message can be delivered by the secretary.

### Visitors

All persons entering the school **must** first report to the school office.

## **PARENT VOLUNTEERS – (See Volunteer Handbook)**

School Volunteers are an essential part of what makes NCA such a wonderful place. The presence of volunteers helps enhance the school experience for the children during library time, lunch time, recess, field trips, in extra-curricular sporting events, the list goes on and on. As volunteers are generously giving of their time and talent for the benefit of children, we know that volunteers also understand the need to protect all children and ensure the safest possible environment for the children at all times.

The Archdiocese has policy that all school volunteers need to complete the following steps before working with children in any capacity:

1. A form 7703
2. A Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) form
3. A signed Code of Conduct
4. A background screening through eAppsDB
5. A certificate of completion of the Virtus training

Once all of these steps have been completed and your paperwork is on file in the school office, you can begin volunteering with the children. We realize that this process is complicated, however this policy protects all of our children and we know that parents understand and appreciate these efforts to protect the children.

There are many ways parents can play a significant role. It is good for the children to see their dad or mom showing special interest in their school. All parents are asked to give twenty hours of time to the school through Service Hours. Of course, no family is limited to 20 hours! For each hour not served, however, the family will be billed \$25. As the goal behind this expectation, is to engage ALL NCA families in actively participating in the school, service hours are not transferable between families.

Some of the ways parents can earn hours and have fun with other parents:

- room parent
- lunchroom helper
- library aide
- chaperone for events
- recess supervisor
- coach a team
- Parent Organization activities

-serve on School Board or one of its committees:

Finance      Long Range Planning      Athletics      Fundraising

## **SCHOOL BOARD**

The NCA School Board advises the school administration on a number of topics, including school policies, the NCA budget and tuition rates. Board members also serve on committees that deal with subjects such as Athletics, Finance, Marketing and Long-Range Planning. The Board meets five times a year, 7:00 pm at the Primary Campus lunchroom. See school calendar for dates.

Anyone wishing to add an item to the Board Agenda must put that request in writing two weeks prior to the Board Meeting. These notes can be sent through school, addressed to Annie O'Neil, School Board President, c/o either campus office.

### **School Board Officers**

Annie O'Neil – President  
Jennifer Reyes – Vice President  
Sara Ellis – Secretary

## **NCAPO**

The NCA Parent Organization (NCAPO) works to provide opportunities for NCA students (and their families) to get together for fun or for learning. Some of their activities have included: Back-to-school coffees, Room Parents Program, movie nights, and school-wide activities such as the Family Directory, informational meetings for parents, seasonal parties, Family Dances, etc. Parents should watch their Wednesday envelopes for opportunities to become involved.

**Room Parent Responsibilities:** NCA Room Parents will be asked to assist (or help find assistance) the teacher with various class activities which may include, but are not limited to; classroom parties, class projects, field trips, library, lunch or recess duty, etc. The job of Room Parent is to offer support to the teacher and his/her classroom when needed.

NCA Room Parents will also be asked to help contact families in their child's classroom in case of an emergency school closing. This can be accomplished via the class phone tree with assistance from other parents. (See Emergency Daytime Closing info. page 12 )

In the event a Room Parent requests donations from other parents for either a teacher's gift and/or classroom activities, it is that Room Parent's responsibility to provide class parents and school personnel with financial records for ALL monies received and the documentation for expenditures made. Contributing parents are trusting that their donations will be used for the specified gifts or activities.

### **Athletic Committee**

**The Athletic Committee** has as its main goal planning and implementing a fun, comprehensive athletic program for NCA students. These volunteers meet monthly to coordinate schedules and recruit others to cover all aspects of the sports we offer. Join them! ALL families are welcome to participate.

## **Fundraising**

It is presumed that all NCA families will actively support fundraising efforts to benefit the school. Families may choose not to participate in any or all of the selected fundraising opportunities simply by notifying the campus secretary that they do not wish to participate in that event. Watch your Wednesday envelope for information regarding fundraising opportunities. **Families receiving any form of scholarship during the school year are expected to help us raise at least \$200 in our fundraising efforts.** Parents are encouraged to earn Service Hours by helping with fundraisers.

**Optional:** These are other ways you and your neighbors can easily help NCA.

- **Market Day** is offered through St. Gertrude, St. Gregory, and St. Ignatius parishes. This is a fundraising food cooperative which offers restaurant quality food at great prices.
- **Dominick's Escrip** – Dominick's will contribute up to 4% of your purchases if you register your Fresh Values card number and designate NCA as your desired beneficiary for this fund raiser. To register, visit [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) or come into the school office with your Fresh Values Card.
- **Labels for Education or Box Tops for Education** can be found on many General Mills and Betty Crocker products. Clip these and bring to any campus and NCA will receive 10 cents for each box top.
- **Heartof.com** If you are an online shopper, go to Heartof.com and register as a member of Northside Catholic Academy - we'll receive a portion of your purchase price.
- **Credit Cards that give rebates to schools** There are stores such as Target, K-Mart, and others, as well as online services that allow you to identify Northside Catholic Academy to receive a percentage of your purchase price.

We appreciate anyone who participates in these programs if they fit into your regular buying plans.

## **SCHOOL BOARD TUITION POLICIES**

### **Tuition Policy**

Tuition is paid from August through May directly to Tuition Management Systems through an automatic debiting program. We are aware that tuition can be a significant financial burden, but we must meet our payroll each month. If you are experiencing a serious financial crisis, please talk to the principal or the business manager. Report cards will be held for all delinquent accounts.

### **Scholarships**

Requests for scholarships are made each spring for the following year by completing an application from PSAS (Private School Aid Service). (The application process opens with registration each year.) Awards are determined based on family need and amount of money available in the NCA Scholarship Fund. Those families with severe financial difficulties should discuss those with the principal or the pastor of the parish where you are a registered, active member.

### **Enrollment Agreement**

As part of the registration process, each family is asked to sign an enrollment agreement, which outlines the policies regarding payment of tuition, late fees, checks returned for insufficient funds, fundraising requirements, etc. A copy of the signed form is kept in the bookkeeper's office and one is returned to the family.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICE:**

**Statements in this handbook are subject to amendment with or without notice. The school principal will attempt to keep the school families informed of all changes as soon as practical. Some changes might have to be made immediately due to unforeseen circumstances.**

**If you have questions about...**

Assignments, homework, class activities	Contact classroom teacher by note, email or leave phone message; s/he will contact you.
Student progress, behavior, attitude	Set up appointment with classroom teacher.
Ongoing learning problems	Start with classroom teacher; Request special help and/or testing.
Discipline: specific incident or pattern of incidents in a class involving your child.	Start with appointment w/teacher If further assistance is needed, contact principal to meet with parent and teacher.
School procedures, calendars, administrative matters, schedules, policy matters	Contact the Principal
Change of school policy	Contact principal and School Board. Send note for Board to Annie O'Neil or Jennifer Reues, c/o The Primary Campus
Sacramental Programs	Contact your parish.
Tuition, fees, information about your payments	Contact Tuition Management Systems (TMS) 1-800-722-4867
Bus Routes	Mrs. Suellen Cannon @ 773-743-6277
Sports Programs .....	Contact Individual Team Coach or Athletic Director, Kevin Howard
Hot Lunch/Extended Care	Call Campus Office
Market Day	Rectory at: St. Ignatius, St. Gertrude, or St. Gregory
Scholarship/Tuition ..... Assistance	Get application from Campus Office If financial emergency occurs, contact Principal
Miscellaneous Questions	Contact Campus Secretaries (phone numbers on inside front cover of handbook)